

Inspection of Willow Grove Primary School

Willow Grove, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Greater Manchester WN4 8XF

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 April 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Willow Grove Primary is a welcoming place where pupils are happy. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have an opportunity to have breakfast and social time when they arrive in the morning. This helps them to be ready for learning.

For many pupils, education has been disrupted, and they consequently have gaps in their learning. Staff provide appropriate support to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Overall, pupils achieve well in many subjects.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations. They generally behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are typically respectful to each other and staff. Most pupils are attentive in lessons.

Pupils feel safe. They develop positive relationships with each other and with staff. On the very rare occasions when bullying occurs, staff deal with it effectively. Pupils are clear about who they should speak to if they are worried about anything.

Pupils' personal development is an important priority for leaders. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities, such as swimming, talent competitions and trips to museums and outdoor residential centres. This helps to broaden their experiences and improve their confidence. Pupils enjoy raising money to support charities. They spoke positively about taking on responsibilities, such as being school councillors and members of the eco-committee. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils to improve their football skills.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders want pupils to develop academically, socially and emotionally. Leaders have established a broad and interesting curriculum, which helps to achieve these aims.

In most subjects, the knowledge that pupils will learn is clearly defined and in a logical order. This helps them to build on what they know. However, in a small number of subjects, it is less clear what knowledge pupils will learn. This hampers teachers from knowing exactly what should be taught. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not learn some of the building blocks essential for their future learning.

Typically, teachers deliver the curriculum well. They use assessment strategies effectively to check what pupils know and address any misconceptions they may have. Subject leaders have received training to improve the leadership of their areas. However, in a small number of curriculum areas, subject leaders do not make sufficiently detailed checks to ensure that curriculum content is delivered consistently well. Occasionally, this has led to some pupils not developing a deep understanding in these subjects.

Leaders identify pupils' changing or new additional needs well. Leaders provide teachers with helpful guidance about how to meet pupils' needs. Leaders provide pupils with specialist support, when necessary, such as from educational psychologists and speech and language therapists.

Many pupils arrive with gaps in their reading knowledge. Consequently, leaders have made reading a high priority. Pupils receive appropriate support from staff to help them catch up quickly. Leaders ensure that there is a sharp focus on the learning of new vocabulary for pupils. Most pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to sound out unfamiliar words. Reading books are closely matched to the sounds they are learning. This is helping them to become confident and fluent readers. Pupils have the opportunity to visit the local library, where they can choose a book. Visiting authors and poets inspire children to read more widely.

Leaders have clear routines for pupils to follow. Staff help pupils to manage their behaviour through a variety of strategies, including play therapy. Staff are skilled at supporting pupils who have previously experienced trauma. Staff take effective action to diffuse challenging behaviour quickly, both in lessons and around the school. This helps pupils to concentrate on their learning. Pupils' behaviour improves over time.

Leaders prioritise the emotional needs and mental health of pupils. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is carefully sequenced and implemented effectively. It also allows flexibility for teachers to respond to PSHE related issues as they arise. Pupils have opportunities to cook and budget. They are taught about other religions and cultures. Staff teach pupils to respect differences between people through lessons, visitors and assemblies. Pupils receive appropriate relationships, sex and health education.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They value the support of their colleagues. Staff feel that leaders are considerate of their workload. Teachers, including those who are new to teaching, spoke highly of the training they receive to improve their subject knowledge. Governors carry out their duties effectively. They challenge and support leaders well.

Parents are very positive about the impact that the school has had on their children's behaviour, both in school and at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. Staff receive high-quality training in safeguarding and regular updates. They know how to spot potential signs of abuse and know what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders keep detailed records and follow up any concerns tenaciously with the appropriate agencies, including the local authority and police, when needed. Leaders ensure that pupils and families get the

support they need if there is risk of harm. Staff check pupils' attendance daily. Leaders ensure that pupils remain safe when they are absent from school. Leaders work with pupils to make them aware of risks and help them to understand how to keep safe from harm, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that the knowledge pupils should learn is identified in the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not learn some of the building blocks essential for future learning. Leaders should ensure that in these subjects they carefully identify the important knowledge that pupils should be taught.
- In a few subject areas, subject leaders do not make detailed enough checks to make sure that subject curriculums are delivered as intended. This hampers pupils from achieving as well in these subjects as they do in others. Leaders should continue to ensure that subject leaders are trained and supported so that they are able to check that the curriculum is delivered well in all subjects.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	132155
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10240121
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jackie Woods
Headteacher	Joanna Murphy
Website	www.willowgroveprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 to 11 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An assistant headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan for their social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff. An inspector spoke with governors and two representatives of the local authority.

- Inspectors spoke to many pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the single central record. They met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, school improvement plan, minutes of governor meetings, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, computing and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector observed pupils reading to familiar staff.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses to the staff surveys. An inspector spoke with parents before the start of the school day to gather their views.
- No responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils were received.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jane Holmes

Ofsted Inspector

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